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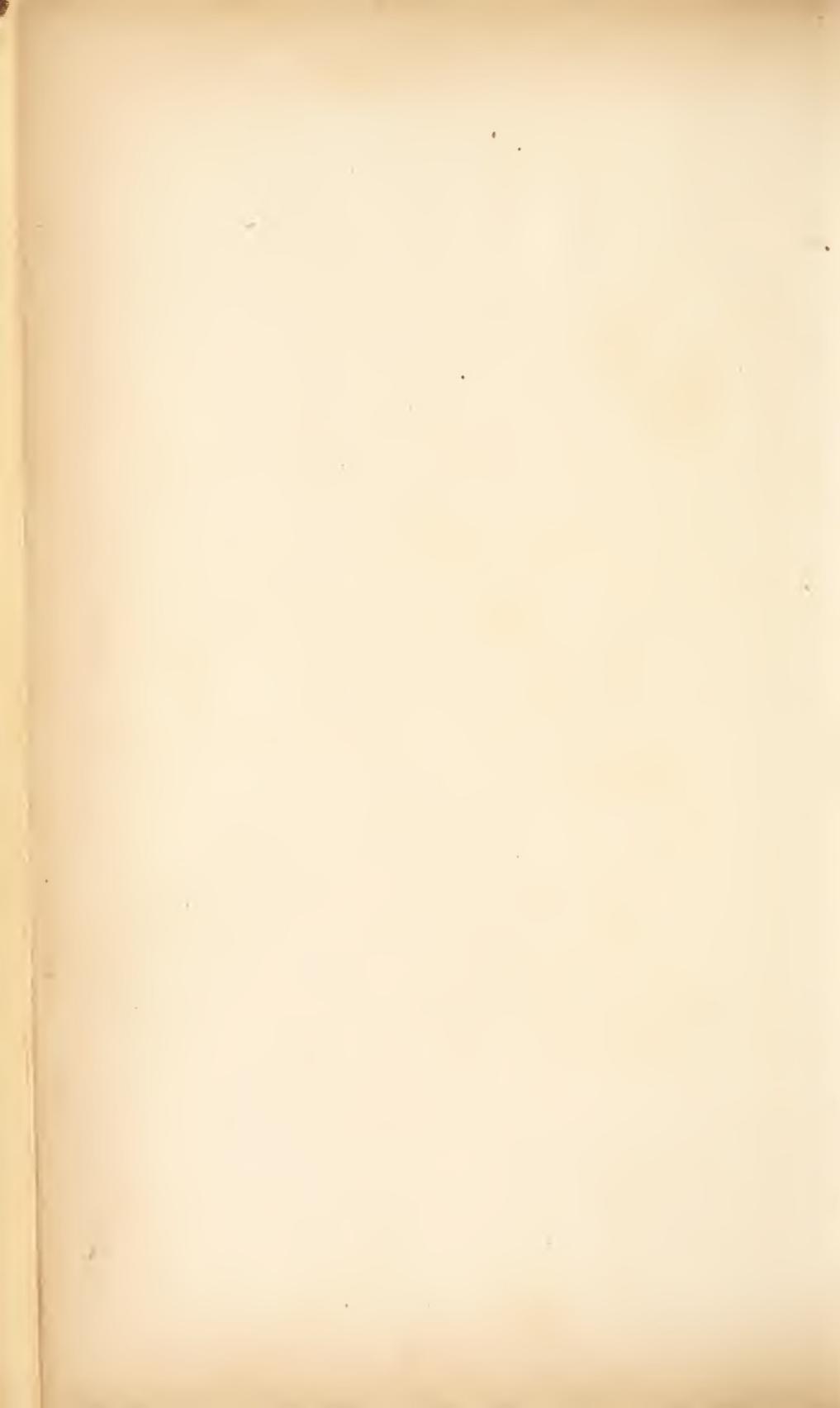


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U. S. Grant
Lt. Gen. USA.

GRANT
AND
HIS CAMPAIGNS:
A MILITARY BIOGRAPHY.

BY
HENRY COPPÉE, A. M.,
EDITOR OF THE UNITED STATES SERVICE MAGAZINE,



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PREFATORY LETTER

FROM THE AUTHOR TO THE PUBLISHER.

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA, }
PHILADELPHIA, *July 1, 1865.* }

MY DEAR SIR:—It is with peculiar pleasure that I have undertaken to write the military biography of LIEUTENANT-GENERAL GRANT, because, having known him from boyhood, I have watched the successive steps and symmetrical development of his character, and find in his complete and rounded life not a single point which will require me to trim my pen for the purposes of championship, extenuation, or palliation. We were cadets together, and I now see how the cadet of 1840 exhibited qualities, not then very striking indeed, but which only needed fostering and opportunity to make him the generalissimo of 1865. The task is, therefore, divested of the chief difficulty which usually besets the biographer. It is to tell a plain story, not to make out a case.

Political history, it is justly said, can only be fairly written when the chief actors have passed away, when party prejudices are removed or tempered by time, when men not only dare to say, but wish to say, and to hear, the truth, with no longer any concern about personal feelings, and when, more than all, we arrive at such a distant point of view, that we take in the entire field of action, and establish a proper co-ordination and relation between

the parts that make up the great whole. This is far less true of military history. The military art is not based upon policy and expediency, but upon exact mathematics. Something, it is true, must be allowed to chance, something to the admixture of the political element; and local heroes must be sometimes bolstered for a time at the expense of truth. But when the great demonstration is fully made, we can calculate and eliminate from the record the fortuitous circumstances, and the unduly praised hero soon finds his proper level; and so it happens that the great battle-problems, in their main features at least, are, within a short time, justly solved, and forever settled. Although half-informed men still wage furious controversy about Waterloo, we have learned but little new *on that subject* since it was first presented in the dispatches. Unwritten history can do little to affect the main features of Fort Donelson, Vicksburg, or the capture of Richmond.

But General Grant's case is one of peculiar force. We are met in his career with no vexed questions, and few, if any, doubtful ones. There are not two parties about his fame. He has done so much, and done all so well, that our only concern must be to place his deeds most carefully on record, in order that the world may know, fully and in detail, what they have admired in grand outline; and this is my purpose.

I have great pride in knowing that I undertake the work, not only with General Grant's sanction, but with his exclusive promise of every assistance. He has directed material and maps to be put in my hands, which cannot otherwise be obtained, and he and the gentlemen of his staff have offered to answer all questions, and supply all I shall need to make the work a faithful historic record. He desires nothing more than this.

Again, it is worthy of observation, that the work could not have been properly undertaken before the present

time. It is only now that his career, in this war, is a *fait accompli*. Until the destruction of the rebellion, he was only pledged to a certain and most arduous labor, and the verdict upon any former record of his life must be "Incomplete!" True, he had already done much as a general, but the great work was not done; the most brilliant chapter, before which all others pale their fires, could not before this have been written. There is no more brilliant chapter in any military life!

The plan of my biography will exhibit a clear chronological history of General Grant's campaigns, illustrated by maps and diagrams furnished, and, in some cases, suggested by the General; an occasional critical summary at the close of a campaign, connecting its prominent events, and presenting its military sequence; and an appendix, containing the most important dispatches referred to in the text. Such *truthful* anecdotes as I can gather, really illustrative of his character, I shall take great pleasure in inserting; I shall, however, make none for the purpose. In the course of the narrative I shall try my pen at sketches of the distinguished commanders who have executed Grant's plans. Many of them are old comrades and friends, and I can therefore speak from personal knowledge, without having recourse to loose fancies of rapid writers, who put themselves, but not their heroes, in print.

I think I may safely promise the public that although the work might have been better done by other hands, they will find, in this volume, the truth carefully sifted from the great mass of materials, systematically digested, scientifically presented in a military point of view, and uninfluenced by prejudice of any kind whatever.

In complying with your request to furnish a small portion of the volume to make up a specimen-book, I have thought best to send you a slight sketch of Grant's youth and cadet-life, with a glimpse of him at the opening of the

war, and to supplement these with a picture of the same man, when, after a wonderful series of successes, as Lieutenant-General, he took the darkling world on his shoulders, and, as we since know, bore it, without staggering, until he could once more poise it, and send it anew upon its orbit of light and joyous life.

These, it seemed to me, would best illustrate his character; while we ask the reader to wait for a short time only that we may depict, as vividly as our enthusiastic pen is able,

“The story of his life
From year to year, the battles, sieges, fortunes
That he has passed,”

which interlink in iron chain-work the peaceful youth with the stormy, successful, illustrious manhood of our “great captain.”

Wishing for our joint project many readers, and a success worthy its subject,

I am, very sincerely, yours,
H. COPPÉE.

C. B. RICHARDSON, Esq.,
Publisher, 540 Broadway, N. Y.

EXTRACT FROM CHAPTER I.

* * * * *

THE reverberation of Ruffin's cannon* went rolling over the land. It leaped the Blue Ridge, screamed through its wild passes, traversed the valleys of tributary streams, and poured in unabated thunder-tones upon the banks of the Mississippi. Everywhere it roused the patriots to action. The nation sprang to its feet. The whole country, but yesterday a people of compromisers and deprecators of civil war, now flew to arms. Volunteering was the order of the day: the enthusiasm was unbounded. Old men, with spectacles, and in unsightly jackets, nearly killed themselves at nightly home-guard drills in academies of music, concert rooms, and town halls; small boys formed light-infantry companies; women made haversacks and hayelocks—the latter of no earthly use except to awaken, or rather keep alive, a spirit of patriotic labor; and men in the bloom of youth and prime of manhood flocked to the rendezvous to take the field.

It is true we did not know how to fight: we had no generals to lead us, except some old relics of our former wars. That fine old veteran, General Scott, had passed his seventieth year, and, from the effects of old wounds, was in no condition to take the field. Our army was but

* "The first shot at Fort Sumter, from Stevens's Battery, was fired by the venerable Edmund Ruffin, of Virginia."—*New York Herald*, April 13, 1861. On the 20th of June, 1865, this venerable gentleman blew out his brains: he certainly made two remarkable shots.

"the skeleton of the forty-eighth," an army only in name; our volunteers were willing, but entirely ignorant; our regulars had not been drilled at brigade manœuvres, and their officers knew little about them. In most cases, before the war, there were not sufficient troops at the garrison-posts to drill at battalion manœuvres. No one knew how extensive the theatre of war was to be; on what a scale the rebels had been preparing to carry it on; what we should need in the way of an army, of supplies and munitions of war: we were certain of one thing, and that was that we were deficient in every thing. Even the strategic features of the country—unlike those of Europe, where every little rivulet and mountain-spur has been fought over, and has its military place in history—had never been studied. Perhaps it was incident to this state of things that statesmen spoke oracularly of "no war," or "one effective blow," or "sixty days," for which to discount the struggle. But in spite of their predictions the storm grew apace, and, in the midst of obscurity, we blundered on in ignorant and absurd experiments. Speak but of a man who could aid us, suggest a hero, and the people turned to him with the blind worship of helpless fear. Not what he had done, but what he was going to do, made him illustrious: he was already a new incarnation of the god of war; a second Napoleon come to battle. It is both needless and useless now to demonstrate how unjust this was to those thus bepraised, and what sore humiliation it was to bring upon the worshippers. But there was no calm judgment then; the danger was imminent, the need urgent, the fear great. At last the lightning fell, and Bull Run was followed by a horror of great darkness over the land,—the darkest hour before the dawn.

The truth is, there was no man at that time in America who could grasp the colossal problem; no man on either side. We were babes in military practice; our armies

and our generals needed education from the very elementary principles, and especially that education of mistakes, which Marmont declares to be the very best of all. The Grant of Belmont could not have fought the battle of Pittsburg Landing, and it needed the practice of Vicksburg and Chattanooga to fit him for the terrible struggles of the campaign from the Rapidan.

Months and years passed, and we became gradually enlightened ; our troops became veterans, and our leaders, carefully sifted, became generals. None are now invested with honors who have not fully earned them, and we stand to-day at the open portals of that glorious peace which our defenders have achieved, ready to accord them intelligent praise in proportion to their real merits. And thus we reach the life of Lieutenant-General Grant, one of the many who rushed to the field when Ruffin's cannon sounded the alarm—a graduate of West Point, educated, indeed, as a subordinate officer, but not as a general ; to be educated in and by the war. His career, beginning with the Sumter gun, is in itself an epitome of the war, and marks its grandest epoch when armed rebellion threw down its weapons, and the country, more by his power than by that of any other individual man, stood new-born, with a giant's strength, and, in the often quoted words of Curran, never elsewhere so applicable, “redeemed, regenerated, and disenthralled, by the irresistible genius of universal emancipation.”

CHAPTER II.

GRANT was a true autochthon, a son of the soil, heir to no splendid heritage, but to the nobility of labor. His early history needs but little comment. Born of respectable parents to the honorable sturdy life of the West, he needs no exhibition of long descent to inaugurate his history. If Napoleon could rebuke the genealogist, who was creating for him a pedigree, with the words, "Friend, my patent dates from Monte Notte," Grant may claim his American nobility from Fort Donelson.

On the one hand, all efforts to establish an aristocratic descent and a remarkable childhood for such a man, are dishonest and absurd; and, on the other hand, all attempts to make his antecedents very humble and his childhood very hard, in order to exalt his after life, are disgusting. The one is absurdly European, and the other belongs to the "new American school of biography," the tendency of which is to make boys despise their fathers, that they may the more thoroughly respect themselves.*

We may, however, place on record what is truthfully known of his family and childhood, being sure that there is nothing in Grant's past upon which he does not look with honest pride.

His father is Jesse R. Grant, the descendant of a Scot-

* See an excellent article, by *Gail Hamilton*, in "Skirmishes and Sketches," in which, with the vindictiveness of Herod, she slaughters the "Bobbin Boys," "Ferry Boys," "Errand Boys," "Tanner Boys," &c., &c. Let us hope she has killed all the "innocents."



Geo. G. Meade
Major Gen^l. U. S. A.

tish family, first represented in this country by two brothers, who emigrated to what were then the American colonies, early in the eighteenth century, of whom one settled in Canada and the other in New Jersey. Jesse Grant, who comes from the New Jersey branch, was born in Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania, in 1794. In 1805 his father died, and Jesse, then an orphan of eleven years, was apprenticed to a tanner. We need not trace the wanderings of Jesse Grant with his mother and family, from Pennsylvania to Maysville in Kentucky, then to Ravenna, thence to Ohio. The country was in a disordered state by reason of British intrigue with Indian barbarity ; in many parts the climate was unhealthy, and so we find him, after many changes to better his lot, residing at Point Pleasant, Clermont County, Ohio.

Grant's mother was Hannah Simpson, the daughter of John Simpson. She was born in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania ; but removed with her father and family to Clermont County, Ohio, in 1818, where, in June, 1821, she married Jesse R. Grant. Ten months after, on the twenty-seventh of April, 1822, their first child, known to the world as ULYSSES SIMPSON GRANT,* was born in a small one-story cottage, still standing on the banks of the Ohio, commanding a view of the river and of the Kentucky shore.

From what we know of Grant's parents—the probity, energy, and hard labor of his father ; the consistent Christian character, kind heart, and devotion to her family displayed by his excellent mother—we have another beautiful illustration of the moral heritage of children, and another proof that God shows mercy and gives great reward to them that love him, to many generations.

* There is a story that he was named *Hiram Ulysses*, but that his cadet warrant was made out for *Ulysses Sydney* ; that he accepted the name while at West Point, only changing it to *Ulysses Simpson*, in honor of his mother, when he graduated.

Many stories are told, of course, exhibiting the sturdy character of young Grant, and his resources under difficulties, but none betokening in a remarkable degree the character of his future career. It is said that, upon proper occasion, he could be pugnacious ; that he was not outwitted in a bargain ; and that he contrived means of overcoming difficulties which would have checked other boys. In the same way, the biographers of Napoleon have found the types of his after life, in his lording it over his elder brother Joseph, and in his bravery in attacking snow forts.

Grant was sturdy, strong, and cool, as many other boys are, but up to the time of his first entry into service no events or actions of his life were the heralds of his present greatness. The qualities undoubtedly were there, but latent ; and of what has evoked them in most men, ambition, he seemed to have none.

The education of the boy was quite limited, like that of most Western boys in moderate circumstances. There was hard work to do, in which the son must help the father, and so it was only in the midwinter months that he could attend the village school. What he learned, however, he learned well, and he acquired with the elements of knowledge, not only a basis, but, what is of far more importance, an ardent desire for a full education.

By the time Grant was seventeen, West Point had acquired great fame throughout the country ; it was known by its fruits ; its *élèves* were gentlemen of high education and noble bearing. In civic life they were eagerly sought after to take the lead in railway engineering and industrial pursuits. They were the chief men in all militia organizations ; indeed the military knowledge of the country was almost as much confined to them as the esoteric meaning of the Egyptian mysteries had formerly been to the priests. It was also known that there a boy, without the necessary means, could obtain the best

education which the country could afford, not gratuitously, but more: he would be paid for learning, trained and maintained as a gentleman, and would receive at the last a high, self-sustaining position—a commission in the army. To such a youth as Grant, it offered a splendid chance, and so application was made to the Honorable Thomas L. Hamer, of Grant's congressional district, who gave him the appointment. Thus, with a good basis of hard, self-reliant, and eager boyhood, he was admitted to the preliminary examination, and entered the Military Academy on the first of July, 1839.* Such are the details which would have had no importance whatever, had it not been for subsequent events.

Even a step farther we may follow him without any temptation to worship the incipient hero. His scholarship at West Point was respectable and no more. He went through the entire course, like his classmates, no cadet being allowed any option.† From September to June, the cadets are in barracks, studying, riding, and fencing in the riding-hall, and, in fine weather, drilling in the afternoons at infantry; from June to September, they encamp upon the plain, and their time is entirely employed in drills of every kind, guard duty, pyrotechny, and practical engineering.

In his cadet studies, Grant had something to contend with in the fact of his own lack of early preparation, and the superior preparation of most of his competitors, who had been over a part of the course before they entered. Among these were William B. Franklin, who stood at the head of the class; Roswell S. Ripley, not famous for his "History of the Mexican War" (written in the interest of General Pillow, and to injure General Scott),

* The preliminary examination is extremely simple—reading, spelling, writing, and arithmetic through decimal fractions.

† In our day, it was only the *first* section of each class who learned something more than was required of the rest.

but quite infamous for firing with great rapidity upon the burning Sumter, which the devoted garrison were trying to extinguish ; Rufus Ingalls, the excellent quartermaster-general of the Army of the Potomac ; Joseph J. Reynolds, late commander in Arkansas ; Christopher C. Augur, long in command at Washington ; the rebel General Franklin Gardner, who surrendered Port Hudson to Banks when Grant had taken Vicksburg ; and others, to whom we design no discredit by not mentioning them. Thirty-nine of the one hundred and more who had been appointed in 1839, graduated in 1843. Grant was the independent middle man, twenty-first on the list.

The honor of being his comrade for two years at the Academy, enables me to speak more intelligently, perhaps, than those of "the new school," who have invented the most absurd stories to illustrate his cadet-life. I remember him as a plain, common-sense, straight-forward youth ; quiet, rather of the old-head-on-young-shoulders order, shunning notoriety ; quite contented, while others were grumbling ; taking to his military duties in a very business-like manner ; not a prominent man in the corps, but respected by all, and very popular with his friends. His sobriquet of *Uncle Sam* was given to him there, where every good fellow has a nickname, from these very qualities ; indeed, he was a very uncle-like sort of a youth. He was then and always an excellent horseman, and his picture rises before me as I write, in the old torn coat,* obsolescent leather gig-top, loose riding pantaloons, with spurs buckled over them, going with his clanking sabre to the drill-hall.. He exhibited but little enthusiasm in any thing : his best standing was in the mathematical branches and their application to tactics and military engineering.

* Riding-jackets, if we remember rightly, had not then been issued, and the cadets always wore their seediest rig into the sweat and dust of the riding-drill.

If we again dwell upon the fact that no one, even of his most intimate friends, dreamed of a great future for him, it is to add that, looking back now, we must confess that the possession of many excellent qualities, and the entire absence of all low and mean ones, establish a logical sequence from first to last, and illustrate, in a novel manner, the poet's fancy about

“The baby figures of the giant mass
Of things to come at large,”

the germs of those qualities which are found in beautiful combination in Wordsworth's “Happy Warrior”:

“The generous spirit who, when brought
Among the tasks of real life, hath wrought
Upon the plan that pleased his infant thought.”

And at this point of view, as we find the Western boy, after the compacting, instructing, developing processes of West Point, coming forth, a man, ready for the stern realities of American life, we may pause to point him out to our American youth as an example henceforth to be followed; then, as now, a character which, in the words of a friend, “betrayed no trust, falsified no word, violated no rights, manifested no tyranny, sought no personal aggrandizement, complained of no hardship, displayed no jealousy, oppressed no subordinate; but, in whatever sphere, protected every interest, upheld his flag, and was ever known by his humanity, sagacity, courage, and honor.” What more can be claimed for any young man? What for the greatest of captains?

He left West Point as brevet second-lieutenant in the Fourth Infantry; and with his army life we begin another chapter in his history.

CHAPTER III.

ON the 1st of July, 1843, Grant began his army service as brevet second-lieutenant in the Fourth Infantry. The explanation of this is, that there being no vacancy in the infantry arm, all graduated cadets are thus attached, in the order of merit, to regiments, as supernumerary officers, each to await a vacancy in his turn. The regiment was then at Jefferson Barracks, near St. Louis, Missouri ; but, in the summer of 1844, it was removed to Natchitoches, La., and, as the Mexican plot thickened, in 1845, it was sent to Corpus Christi, to watch the Mexican army then concentrating upon the frontier. Grant was made a full second-lieutenant in the seventh regiment on the 30th of September, 1845. But he had formed an attachment for the fourth, and applied to remain in it ; this was granted by the War Department. He was fortunate enough to be at Palo Alto and Resaca, May 6 and 7, 1846, the trial fights of the American army against a civilized enemy, after thirty years of peace ; and he participated in the bloody battle of Monterey, September 23, 1846. His regiment was soon after called away from General Taylor's command, to join General Scott in his splendid campaign from Vera Cruz to Mexico, two hundred and seventy-two miles in the heart of the enemy's country. He was at the siege and capture of Vera Cruz, March 29, 1847, and on April 1, preparatory to the advance, he was appointed regimental quarter-master, a post which he held during the remainder of the war. It is a position requiring system and patience, and drawing a small addi-

tional pay ; it is usually conferred upon some solid, energetic, pains-taking officer, not necessarily one remarkable for dash and valor. Being in charge of the regimental equipage and trains, the quarter-master may, without impropriety, remain with these during actual battle, as we have known many to do. It is, therefore, recorded as greatly to the praise of Grant, that he always joined his regiment in battle, and shared their fighting. At Molino del Rey, September 8, 1847, he was distinguished, and was brevetted first-lieutenant for his services : this brevet, however, owing to the fact of his becoming a full first-lieutenant by the casualties of that battle, he declined. At Chapultepec, September 13, 1847, Grant joined, with a few of his men, some detachments of the second artillery, under Captain Horace Brooks, in an attack on the enemy's breastworks, served a mountain howitzer, and hastened the enemy's retreat, and "acquitted himself most nobly under the observation" of his regimental, brigade, and division commanders.*

For this action Grant received the brevet of captain for "gallant and meritorious conduct," awarded in 1849, but not confirmed until 1850.

His first-lieutenancy dated from September 16, 1847. It must not be supposed that these services during the Mexican war are now dressed up to assimilate with his after career. He was really distinguished in that war above most of those of his own rank.†

* See General Worth's, Lieutenant-Colonel Garland's, and Major Francis Lee's reports of that battle.

† During our residence at the capital I remember a "horse story" about Grant, which has not appeared in the books, but which is, at least, true. He was an admirable horseman, and had a very spirited horse. A Mexican gentleman, with whom he was upon friendly terms, asked the loan of his horse. Grant said afterwards, "I was afraid he could not ride him, and yet I knew if I said a word to that effect, the suspicious Spanish nature would think I did not wish to lend him." The result was the

Upon the close of the war by the treaty promulgated in April, 1848, the Fourth Infantry was sent first to New York, and then to the Northern frontier, and for some time Grant served in the command of his company, first at Detroit, and then at Sackett's Harbor.

In August, 1848, he married Miss Dent, sister of his classmate, Frederick J. Dent, who resided in St. Louis.

Incident to the acquisition of California and the wonderful discoveries of gold, troops were more necessary on our Western coast than elsewhere, to protect the emigrants and the new Pacific settlements from the depredations of the Indians. The Fourth Infantry was therefore ordered to Oregon, in the autumn of 1851, and one battalion, with which Brevet Captain Grant was serving, was ordered to Fort Dallas, where he saw some service against the Indians.

After a two-years absence from his family, and with but little prospect of promotion in those "dull and piping times of peace," Grant, having been promoted to a full captaincy in August, 1853, resigned his commission in July 31, 1854, and set forth to commence life anew as a citizen. That he tried many shifts, does not betoken a fickle or volatile nature, but simply the invention which is born of necessity. As a small farmer, near St. Louis, and a dealer in wood, he made a precarious living; * as a

Mexican mounted him, was thrown before he had gone two blocks, and killed on the spot.

* I visited St. Louis at this time, and remember with pleasure, that Grant, in his farmer rig, whip in hand, came to see me at the hotel, where were Joseph J. Reynolds, then Professor, now Major-General, General (then Major) D. C. Buell, and Major Chapman of the cavalry. If Grant had ever used spirits, as is not unlikely, I distinctly remember that, upon the proposal being made to drink, Grant said, I will go in and look at you, for I never drink any thing; and the other officers, who saw him frequently, afterwards told me that he drank nothing but water.

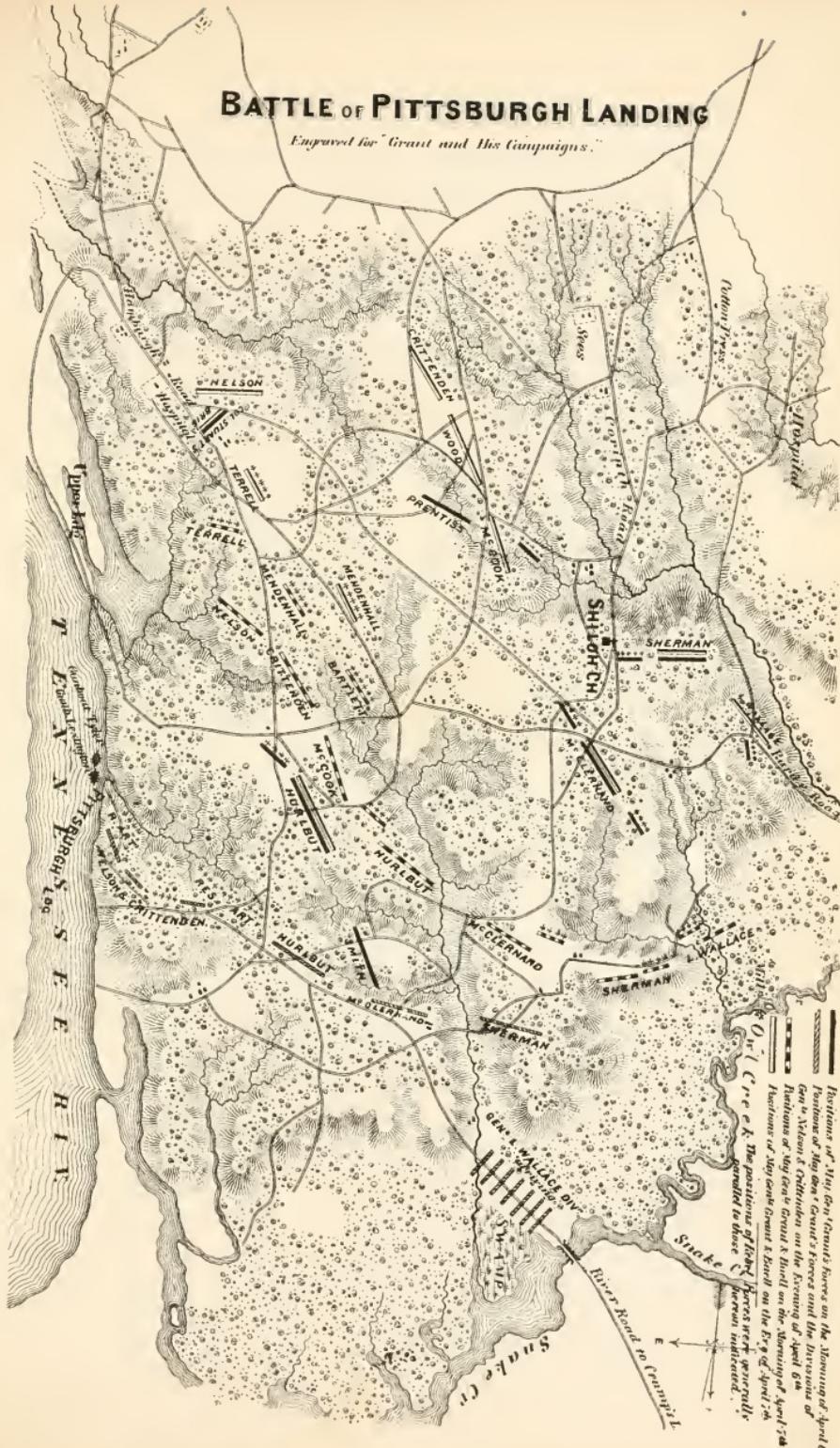


Geo. H. Thomas
Maj. Genl. U.S.A.

— A. Fullerton — 1863 —

~~BATTLE OF PITTSBURGH LANDING~~

Engraved for "Grant and His Campaigns."



money collector he did no more, having neither the nature to bully nor the meanness to wheedle the debtors. He could not

“ Crook the pregnant hinges of the knee
That thrift may follow fawning.”

He is said also to have played the auctioneer ; but in this branch, unless he made longer speeches than he has since done, he could achieve no success.

In 1859 he entered into partnership with his father, who had been prosperous in the tanning business, in a new leather and saddlery store in Galena, Illinois. Here, in a place of growing trade with Wisconsin, Iowa, and Minnesota, the industry, good sense, and honesty of Grant did at length achieve a certain and honorable success, and, had the rebellion not broken out, he would have had a local reputation in the firm of Grant & Son, as an admirable judge of leather, perhaps mayor of Galena, with a thoroughly well-mended sidewalk, visited always with pleasure by his old army friends travelling Westward, but never heard of by the public. His greatest success had been achieved in the army ; his Mexican experience gave glimpses of a future in that line ; he needed only opportunity, and he was to have it abundantly. Here, then, we mark a new epoch in his life—a sudden plunge unexpected and unheralded,—

“ The torrent’s smoothness ere it dash below.”

CHAPTER IV.

IT may be easily conceived how the treachery of Southern leaders, the secession of South Carolina, and the bombardment of Fort Sumter affected Grant. A decided Democrat before the war, he had, in his limited sphere, been in favor of conceding to the South all its rights, perhaps more; but when the struggle actually began, his patriotism and military ardor were aroused together. As a patriot, he was determined to support his Government and uphold his flag; and as a soldier, he saw opening before him a career of distinction for which he had been educated, and in which he had already, in some degree, distinguished himself. In May he raised a company in his own neighborhood, and marched with it to Springfield, the place of rendezvous. It was not long before Governor Yates, to whom he had been recommended by a member of Congress from his State, made use of Grant's experience in organizing the State troops. He was appointed Adjutant-General of the State, and proceeded to the difficult task of mustering the three-months men, which, amid much confusion, he accomplished by his indefatigable energy. While on a brief visit to his father, at Covington, Kentucky, Grant received a commission from the Governor as colonel of the Twenty-first Illinois Volunteers, three-months men. They subsequently enlisted, owing to their confidence in him, one thousand strong, for three years' service. Grant's first concern was to drill and discipline his regiment, which soon became marked for its excellent order. Removing them from

their place of organization, Mattoon, Illinois, to Caseyville, he superintended their drill ; and, not long after, he marched them, in default of railroad transportation, one hundred and twenty miles, to Quincy, on the Mississippi, which was supposed to be in danger. Thence he moved, under orders, to defend the line of the Hannibal and Hudson Railroad, from Hannibal and Quincy, on the Mississippi, to St. Joseph, and here coming into contact with other regiments, his military knowledge and experience pointed to him, although the youngest colonel, as the commander of the combined forces. As acting brigadier-general of this force, his head-quarters, on the 31st of July, 1861, were at Mexico, Missouri. We need not detail the marches of Grant's regiments in the "District of Northern Missouri"—as General Pope's command was called—to Pilot Knob and Ironton and Jefferson City, to defend the river against the projected attacks of Jeff. Thompson. In August he received his commission as brigadier-general of volunteers, to date from May 17. He was seventeenth in a list of thirty-four original appointments of that date. He was ordered to proceed to Cairo, and there, with two brigades, he took command of the important strategic territory entitled "The District of Southeast Missouri," including both banks of the Mississippi River, from Cape Girardeau to New Madrid, and on the Ohio it included the whole of Western Kentucky. A glance at the map discloses the strategic importance of Cairo, as a base of operations for a southern advance, and of vital importance in the line of defence for the extensive and rich country lying between the Ohio and the Mississippi. It is especially valuable for river expeditions, the transportation of supplies, and the equipment of a gunboat fleet. The parallel flow of the Tennessee and Cumberland northward into the Ohio also includes a most important portion of West Kentucky, which Grant saw at a glance was to become the scene of immediate hostilities.

Grant was now in his element ; he not only accomplished with alacrity what he was ordered to do, but he made work for his troops. He at once displayed that energy which he has never abated for an instant during the war.

The attempted and absurd neutrality of Kentucky was one-sided ; it was to keep Union troops away and let rebels attack.* The latter were not slow in availing themselves of this privilege. Seizing, first Hickman, and then Columbus and Bowling Green, and fortifying the Tennessee at Fort Henry, and the Cumberland at Fort Donelson, they established a first strong line from the Mississippi to Virginia in the "neutral" State of Kentucky. Grant followed their lead in sending, on the 6th of September, a strong force to Paducah, where the Tennessee empties into the Ohio, under command of General C. F. Smith, much to the chagrin of the secessionists there, who were awaiting a rebel force. In the same manner he occupied Smithland, near the mouth of the Cumberland, and thus made two vital moves in the game which was to cry checkmate at Fort Donelson. These points were also valuable to the rebels as gateways of supplies. From the places now occupied Grant at once busied himself in making numerous reconnoissances in every direction, until at length he was ready to try his "'prentice hand" upon the rebels. When all was ready he moved down the river to Belmont, opposite Columbus, and there the first battle took place. The origin of that movement may be thus briefly stated :—

* And yet this neutrality was reproached by the rebels. Pollard says ("First Year of the War," p. 183) : "If, a few months back, any one had predicted, that in an armed contest between the North and the South, the State of Kentucky would be found acting with the former, and abetting and assisting a war upon States united with her by community of institutions, of interests, and of blood, in any Southern company in which such a speech was adventured he would, most probably, have been hooted at ~~as~~ a fool or chastised as a slanderer."

General Fremont, under date November 1, 1861, directed Grant to make demonstrations "along both sides of the river towards Charleston, Norfolk, and Blandville." On the 2d, he was thus informed by Fremont: "Jeff. Thompson is at Indian's ford of the St. François River, twenty-five miles below Greenville, with about three thousand men. Colonel Carlin has started with a force from Pilot Knob. Send a force from Cape Girardeau and Bird's Point to assist Carlin in driving Thompson into Arkansas." Incident to these instructions, Grant sent Colonel Oglesby, with the Eighth Illinois, four companies of the Eleventh Illinois, the whole of the Eighteenth and Twenty-ninth, and three companies of cavalry, to go to Commerce, Missouri, thence to Sikeston, and pursue Jeff. Thompson (in conjunction with a force from Ironton). On the 5th, he was informed that Polk was re-enforcing Price's army from Columbus. In this complication of circumstances he determined to threaten Columbus and attack Belmont. Oglesby was deflected to New Madrid, and Colonel W. H. L. Wallace sent to reinforce him. The object of the attack then was to cut off the rebel line in Kentucky from Price's forces in Missouri, and also to keep Polk from interfering with the detachments Grant had sent out in pursuit of Jeff. Thompson.

Grant directed General C. F. Smith to make a demonstration upon Columbus from Paducah, and then himself sent down a small force on the Kentucky side to Ellicott's Mills, about twelve miles from Columbus. Having taken these precautions to deceive the enemy, he embarked his expeditionary force at Cairo on the 6th of November—three thousand one hundred and fourteen men,* chiefly Illinois volunteers, with the Seventh Iowa,

* McClelland's Brigade (Twenty-seventh, Thirtieth, Thirty-first Illinois), with cavalry. Dougherty's Brigade, Twenty-second Illinois, Seventh Iowa.—*Grant's Revised Report, June 26, 1865.*

upon four boats, convoyed by the gunboats Lexington, Captain Stembel, and Tyler, Captain Walker in command, the gunboats in advance. Moving with due caution, they reached Island No. 1, eleven miles above Columbus, that night, and lay against the Kentucky shore. It was then he heard that Polk was crossing troops to Belmont to cut off Oglesby. The next morning he moved to Hunter's Point, two miles above Belmont, on the Missouri shore, where his troops were landed and formed into column of attack.

The rebel forces at Columbus were commanded by Major-General Leonidas Polk, a bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church, the purity of whose lawn is forever stained with blood drawn by carnal weapons; a weak but brave man, whose West Point education was at least worth something to the rebel cause. Polk had posted a small force on the right bank, to keep open his communications, and, as soon as he had wind of Grant's movement, and Smith's demonstration to Maysfield, he expected an attack on Columbus, or at least in Kentucky. Indeed, until the close of the engagement, he apprehended an attack in his rear.

Grant's movement took him somewhat by surprise. From the point of debarkation, one battalion having been left as a reserve near the transports, the troops were marched by flank towards Belmont, and drawn up in line of battle about a mile from Belmont. Skirmishers were then thrown forward, who soon encountered Colonel Tappan's rebel force, consisting of three regiments, reinforced by Pillow with three more, and the general engagement took place. Deploying his entire force as skirmishers, Grant drove the enemy back, fighting from tree to tree, for about two miles, until he reached the intrenched camp protected by slashed timber as an abatis. In rear of this, opposing our left, were the Thirteenth Arkansas and the Ninth Tennessee; and on the right

was Beltzhoover's battery of seven guns and Colonel Wright's regiment. This did not check our impetuous advance. Charging over it with great ardor, our men drove the enemy to the river-bank, and many of them into their transports, and were in possession of every thing.* But as Belmont is on low ground, entirely commanded by the guns from Columbus, it was manifest that the ground thus gained could not be held, and therefore Grant fired the encampment, burning tents, blankets, and stores, and began his return movement with captured artillery, prisoners, and horses. But the end of our success on the field had been attained. Major-General Polk, who was now quite alive to the situation, directed his heaviest guns from Columbus upon our troops. He had already sent over three† regiments in one body, under General Pillow; these were supported by three others, under General Cheatham, which landed some distance above, between our soldiers and the boats. Further to crush Grant's small force, the bishop, although sadly afraid of an attack on his rear at Columbus, took over two regiments in person to aid Pillow's panic-stricken force. But by this time Grant was in retreat to his boats, and only faced to the right and rear to punish Cheatham's flankers, and a portion of Pillow's, under Colonel Marks, who had marched up the river-bank, and endeavored to prevent his return to the boats. In that retreat we suffered very severely, our troops being hard pressed by overpowering numbers. At five in the afternoon our troops had re-embarked, and were on their way to Cairo, while the

* The rebel excuse is, that they were out of ammunition; good, but not new. Pollard says: "In this movement Pillow's line was more or less broken, and his corps mingled together, so that when they reached the river-bank, they had the appearance of a mass of men rather than an organized corps."—*First Year*, p. 201.

† Pollard says *four* regiments, but we give the rebels the benefit of clergy, as the bishop says *three*.

rebels, checked by the fire of our gunboats, glared like baffled tigers, and went back to their smoking camp. We had left two caissons, but had brought off two guns of Beltzhoover's battery. We had eighty-five killed, three hundred and one (many slightly) wounded, and about ninety-nine missing. The gunboats, whose duty was primarily to cover the landing and protect the transports, and also, as far as possible, to engage the Columbus batteries, performed their service to General Grant's entire satisfaction. The Confederate loss was six hundred and thirty-two (Pollard, "First Year of the War"). Both parties claimed a victory, but on the recovery of the field and pursuit of our retiring columns the rebels base their claims to a success, which we need not dispute.* Although, in comparison with subsequent engagements, Belmont seems a small affair, it has an importance peculiarly its own.

I.—It was a *coup d'essai* of our new General. While others of his rank were playing quite subordinate parts in large armies, Grant was making an independent expedition in command, outwitting the enemy, burning his camp, retreating successfully when overpowered, and effecting his purpose in a most soldierly manner.

II.—Again, it was a trial of our new troops in the West, and they acquitted themselves so as to elicit the hearty praise of their commander and the country. They fought well in the attack, from colonels to privates,† in the retreat, and in cutting their way through Cheatham's force, and were never for a moment discouraged.

III.—The objects of the expedition,—to prevent the enemy from sending a force to Missouri to cut off our de-

* In a letter to his father (November 8th), Grant says, "I can say with gratification, that every colonel, without a single exception, set an example to their commands," &c.

† General McClernand's "Official Report." McClernand had three horses shot under him.



Phil Whisman
my hero

tachments which were pressing Thompson, and to prevent his re-enforcing Price,—were fully accomplished. Grant had given him a blow which kept him concentrated lest another might soon follow.

IV.—It demonstrated the weakness of the enemy, and was the prologue of the victory of Fort Donelson, and the piercing of the rebels' line, which threw it back almost upon the Gulf.

Of the personal prowess of General Grant, as evinced in this battle, it is now needless to speak; it was of the highest order. He, as well as General McClemand, had a horse shot under him, and amid the crashing projectiles of heavy guns from Columbus and Belmont, and the fatal storm of musketry, “the gallant conduct of his troops was stimulated by his presence and inspired by his example.”*

* June 26, 1865, General Grant submitted to the Secretary of War a fresh report, to take the place of the old one.

CHAPTER X.

THE LIEUTENANT-GENERAL—RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT.

ON the 2d of March, 1864, Grant was confirmed by the United States Senate, in Executive session, as Lieutenant-General in the Army of the United States. This put him over all our other generals, but did not, without a special order, make him commander-in-chief of our armies.

At five o'clock on the afternoon of Tuesday, the 8th, he arrived in Washington to receive his commission. He seated himself, unnoticed, at the dinner-table of Willard's Hotel; but being discovered by a gentleman who had seen him in New Orleans—for his face was not even then familiar to Washington people—he was brought to his feet by the cry that "the hero of Vicksburg was in the room," and by a storm of cheers which might well bewilder so modest a man. In the evening he attended the President's levee, where he was the observed of all observers.

On the afternoon of the 9th, at one o'clock, he was received by the President in the cabinet chamber, and was presented with the commission. In any one of the old European monarchies, the presentation would have been made among the grandest surroundings. In ancient Rome it would have been inaugurated by a triumph like that in which Titus joined his father after the famous capture of Jerusalem.

But the scene was more in keeping with our republican manners and the still undecided issues of the war. It was no time for pageants: there was no brilliant gath-

ering, no splendid staff. There were the President and his entire cabinet; General Halleck, the retiring commander-in-chief; General Rawlings, Grant's chief-of-staff; Colonel Comstock, his chief-engineer; Mr. Nicolay, the President's private secretary; and the Honorable Owen Lovejoy, of Illinois. It was eminently proper that one other person should be present, and that was the General's eldest son, a fine boy of fourteen, the inheritor of his father's glory, and who with such an example and such training may well be incited to a life of usefulness, and perhaps fame.

When General Grant entered the Executive chamber he was cordially received by the President, and presented to the cabinet. Mr. Lincoln then addressed him in the following words:—

“GENERAL GRANT:—The nation's appreciation of what you have done, and its reliance upon you for what remains to be done in the existing great struggle, are now presented with this commission, constituting you Lieutenant-General in the Army of the United States. With this high honor devolves upon you also a corresponding responsibility. As the country herein trusts you, so, under God, it will sustain you. I scarcely need to add, that, with what I here speak for the nation, goes my own hearty personal concurrence.”

For once in his life, and we believe for the only time, the General could not refuse to make a speech; but what he said was very brief, and to the point; the words, which have a peculiar significance in the light of the great events which have since transpired, were these:—

“MR. PRESIDENT:—I accept the commission, with gratitude for the high honor conferred. With the aid of the noble armies that have fought on so many fields for our common country, it will be my earnest endeavor not to disappoint your expectations. I feel the full weight of the responsibilities now devolving on me, and I know

that if they are met, it will be due to those armies, and, above all, to the favor of that Providence which leads both nations and men."

Introductions followed; half an hour was spent in conversation with the Secretaries, and this simple but important interview was ended.

Making a rapid visit with General Meade to the Army of the Potomac on the 10th, he started on the morning of the 11th for the West, and on the 12th a special order of the President assigned the new Lieutenant-General to the command of all the armies.

And here we may pause for a moment to consider what all this signified.

The revival of this rank of lieutenant-general recalls to us the circumstances under which it had been before conferred in America, and which marked two important periods in our history. In 1798, incident to the threatening aspect of our relations with France, the Congress had conferred it upon Washington, who, in the next year, had he lived, would have been a full general, the only sensible and logical rank which a commander-in-chief should hold. Upon Washington's death, the rank was discontinued.

In the long years from February, 1849, to December, 1852, earnest efforts were made to confer this grade, by brevet, on General Winfield Scott, for his long and illustrious services to the country; but his enemies were ingenuous and malignant, and among them the most pertinacious was the then Honorable Jefferson Davis.

These two great men were the only predecessors of Grant, for whom the full rank was now revived.

The bill reviving it was introduced into the Lower House by Grant's constant friend, the Honorable Mr. Washburne, and being referred to the Military Committee, was slightly amended, and finally presented to the House in the following form:—

“Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the grade of Lieutenant-General be, and the same is hereby, revived in the Army of the United States of America; and the President is hereby authorized, whenever he shall deem it expedient, to appoint, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, a commander of the army, to be selected during war, from among those officers in the military service of the United States, not below the grade of Major-General, most distinguished for courage, skill, and ability; and who, being commissioned as Lieutenant-General, shall be authorized, under the direction of the President, to command the armies of the United States.”

“SEC. 2. *And be it further enacted,* That the Lieutenant-General appointed as is hereinbefore provided, shall be entitled to the pay, allowances, and staff specified in the fifth section of the act approved May 28th, 1798; and also the allowances described in the sixth section of the act approved August 23d, 1842, granting additional rations to certain officers: *Provided,* That nothing in this bill contained shall be construed in any way to affect the rank, pay, or allowances of Winfield Scott, Lieutenant-General by brevet, now on the retired list of the army.”

To this, while in the course of debate, Mr. Ross offered an amendment recommending General Grant for the original vacancy. Mr. Washburne's speech in favor of the amended bill is a masterly and eloquent exposition of the services of General Grant, and his high eulogium has been vindicated in detail by the after history. The opposition was very small; a triumphant majority of one hundred and seventeen to nineteen votes sent it to the Senate, who confirmed it, and on the 1st of March the President approved the bill and nominated Grant. On the second, as we have said, the Senate, in Executive session, confirmed him. Let us add that the country, with one voice, hailed and sanc-

tioned the appointment, the most important ever made in America.

Perhaps we could select no better time to give some delineations of the presence and person of the General thus honored.

He was not quite forty-three years of age, of medium height, and strong, well-knit frame. His appearance, at first sight, is not striking. Careless of dress, and with no grandeur of air or imposing carriage, he would not attract a casual observer in a crowd; but a study of his face while conversing with him would satisfy a physiognomist, even without a knowledge of his history, that he is no ordinary man. His hair is full, brown, worn short, parted at the side over a full forehead, slightly prominent, but not protuberant at the brows. He has a good nose, relieved from the elegant weakness of the Grecian by a slight curve; blue eyes, sad, but neither dreamy nor stupid, which dilate into bold expression in times of action and danger; a firm, evenly-closed mouth, which would express more if free from beard; a beard of reddish brown, cut close, evidently for comfort, and for that readiness of action with which the razor interferes; and a square, but not projecting, jaw and chin. The face, in spite of former critics, tells to my mind its own story fully. I see in it will, energy, a sense of responsibility, reticence, and entire self-control. If any have doubted it, let them study the best photographs again, and they will be convinced.

To pass from his physiognomy to his character. He is a man of irreproachable life and habits; pure, humane, and generous. His everlasting cigar deserves a place in history, for it is a part of the man; he is never without it, and his cigars are very strong; but excess in tobacco depends upon the constitution, and it evidently suits Grant. He is entirely without ostentation in his house and table, and his able staff is kept for use and not show.

In many of his orders and dispatches he has devoutly recognized the providence of God, and his reliance upon it, as being the chief strength of nations and men ; and if he ever swears, the religious world may be certified that his oaths are in the same category with those of my Uncle Toby and of Washington at Monmouth. He is phlegmatic, but not insensible ; cool, but not without enthusiasm ; habitually grave, with a simple dignity, but easily approachable by all, even to the poorest private ; in speech, laconic, but unaffected ; no official non-committal about him ; clear-headed, forgetting nothing, arranging details easily in his capacious brain, without much reliance upon red tape ; blushing when praised, and bearing both praise and blame with silent magnanimity. Above all, he combines what Guizot has called the “genius of common sense,” with a determination to “go ahead.”

Such, in brief, was the man who had made himself a model hero for the American people ; such the man who had come to Washington, on his own merits, but not by his own solicitation, to be made lieutenant-general and commander-in-chief. In the words of Mr. Washburne, *“No man with his consent has ever mentioned his name in connection with any position.* I say what I know to be true, when I allege that every promotion he has received since he first entered the service to put down this rebellion was moved without his knowledge or consent ; and in regard to this very matter of lieutenant-general, *after the bill was introduced and his name mentioned in connection therewith, he wrote me and admonished me that he had been highly honored already by the Government, and did not ask or deserve any thing more in the shape of honors or promotion ; and that a success over the enemy was what he craved above every thing else ; that he only desired to hold such an influence over those under his command as to use them to the best advantage to secure that end.”* But the country had need of him ;

the Government could not do without him, and so they saved themselves by honoring Grant.

And here, while he stands in our narrative at the parting of the ways, let us briefly advert to the retrospect, and then glance at the prospect before him.

First, let us see what he had done to make himself, in violation of the maxim of the French philosopher,* a necessary man to the American people. From the day of his second entry into service as a colonel of volunteers, he had been continually in the field, and not sunning his uniform in the streets of our great cities; he had been constantly enlarging his sphere of action. His name became speedily known to the country, and the laconic philosophy of his dispatches gave the people something to take hold of and ring the chimes upon; some undesignedly eloquent epigram of each great victory. At Fort Donelson, the "unconditional surrender" which he demanded gave a new significance to the initial letters of his name. "I propose to move immediately upon your works," struck a popular chord. Hard pressed at Pittsburg Landing, he told Sherman a characteristic story on the field, illustrating the secret of victory, and ordered him to assume the offensive.

After the great campaign which concluded with the capture of Vicksburg, he received from President Lincoln an autograph letter, magnanimously confessing that he had not been in favor of the plan of campaign, and ending thus: "I now wish to make a personal acknowledgment, that you were right and I was wrong." He had opened the Mississippi from the head-waters to the mud-islands of the Delta.

In really serious straits at Chattanooga, his animals dying by thousands, and his men in danger of starving—not, however, by any fault of his own, for he only

* La Rochefoucauld says: "Il n'y a pas d'homme nécessaire."

assumed command to find the situation such—he had received Bragg's merciful message to remove the non-combatants, and had heard Bragg's characteristic boast that in three days' time Grant's army would be flying in hungry disorder to Nashville; whereas, in three days' time, Bragg's disordered hosts, flanked and beaten in front, were flying southward before Grant's attack.

He had asked for nothing from the Government; had refused to make capital by making speeches; would not be approached on political questions; escaped, except when cornered, from public demonstrations, public dinners, and the like; and now the young man, unknown to the public four years before—wood-dealer, collector, farmer, leather-dealer, and yet always an honest man and a gentleman—had come to Washington to receive his reward, the very greatest to which an American had ever attained.

But it was something far more and far different. We have glanced at the retrospect: let us look for a moment at the nature of the prospect—not simply, as before, one of partial trial and danger and glory, but of a sole and crushing responsibility. As his hand grasped the glittering wreath it turned magically into a flaming sword, and a voice, like apocalyptic thunders, cried “Onward!” The stars shone, indeed, but only to disclose dimly in the darkness new dangers, new struggles, vigils never intermitted; and it was a very bold man indeed, one of sleepless soul, indomitable courage, and undying patriotism, who, amid the roaring Red Sea of battle, the breakers of official dictation, the misapprehensions of profound plans by an impatient and impressible public, who saw only the surface, and last, but not least, the Syrtis Major of politics, could assume such a charge at such a time, even with all its honors. Would he flutter and flounder and fall, like the historical dignitaries of other days, and like the many experimental generals of our own times, who

were tasked above their powers, and failed miserably ? Or would he succeed completely, and achieve a colossal, an unrivalled fame ? Surely, in the latter case, would be applicable to him the words uttered by the eloquent Tully to the clement Cæsar, in which he declares, that in the praise then accorded, the great general has neither rival nor sharers ; it is beyond the grasp of cohort, centurion, or imperator. He stands alone.

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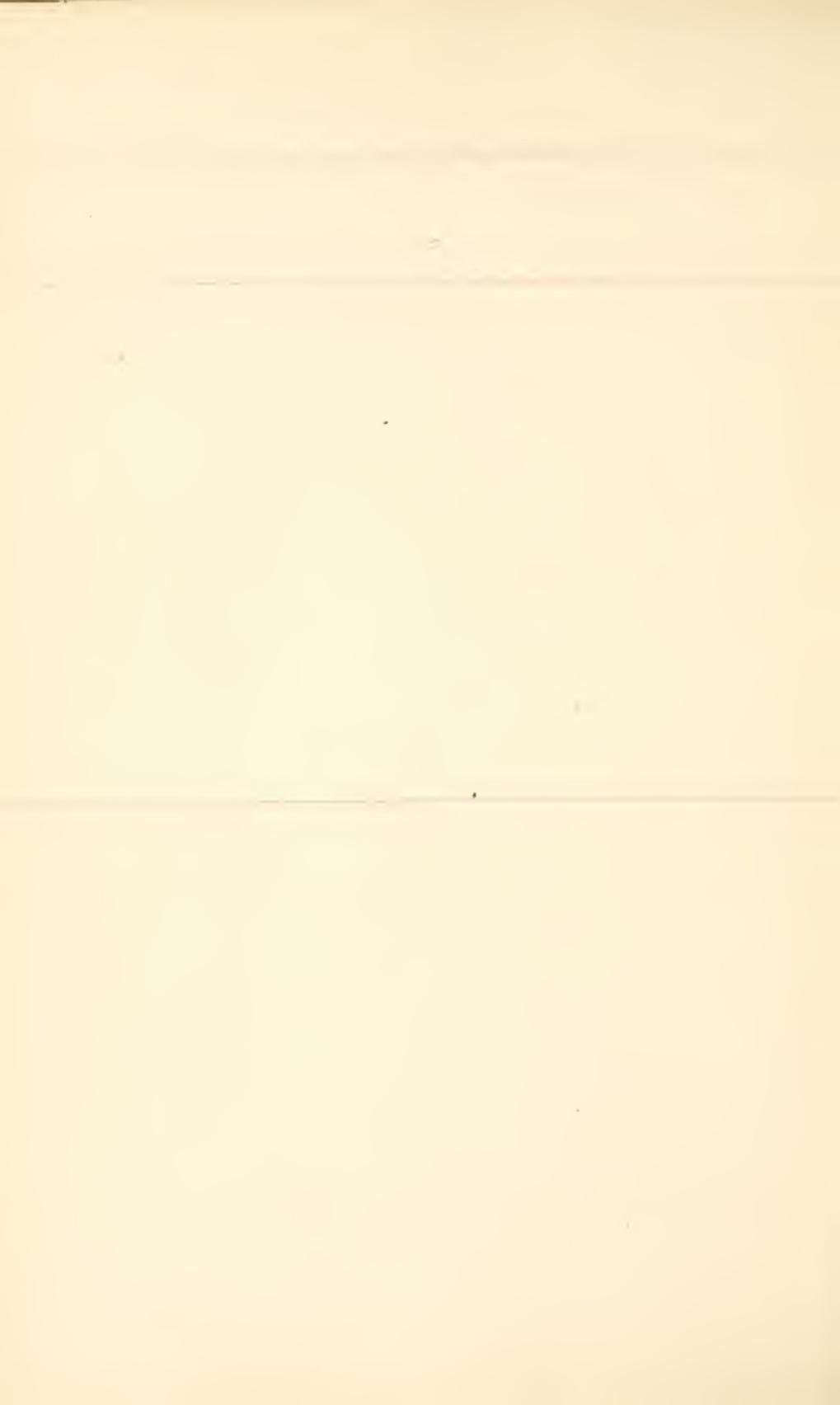




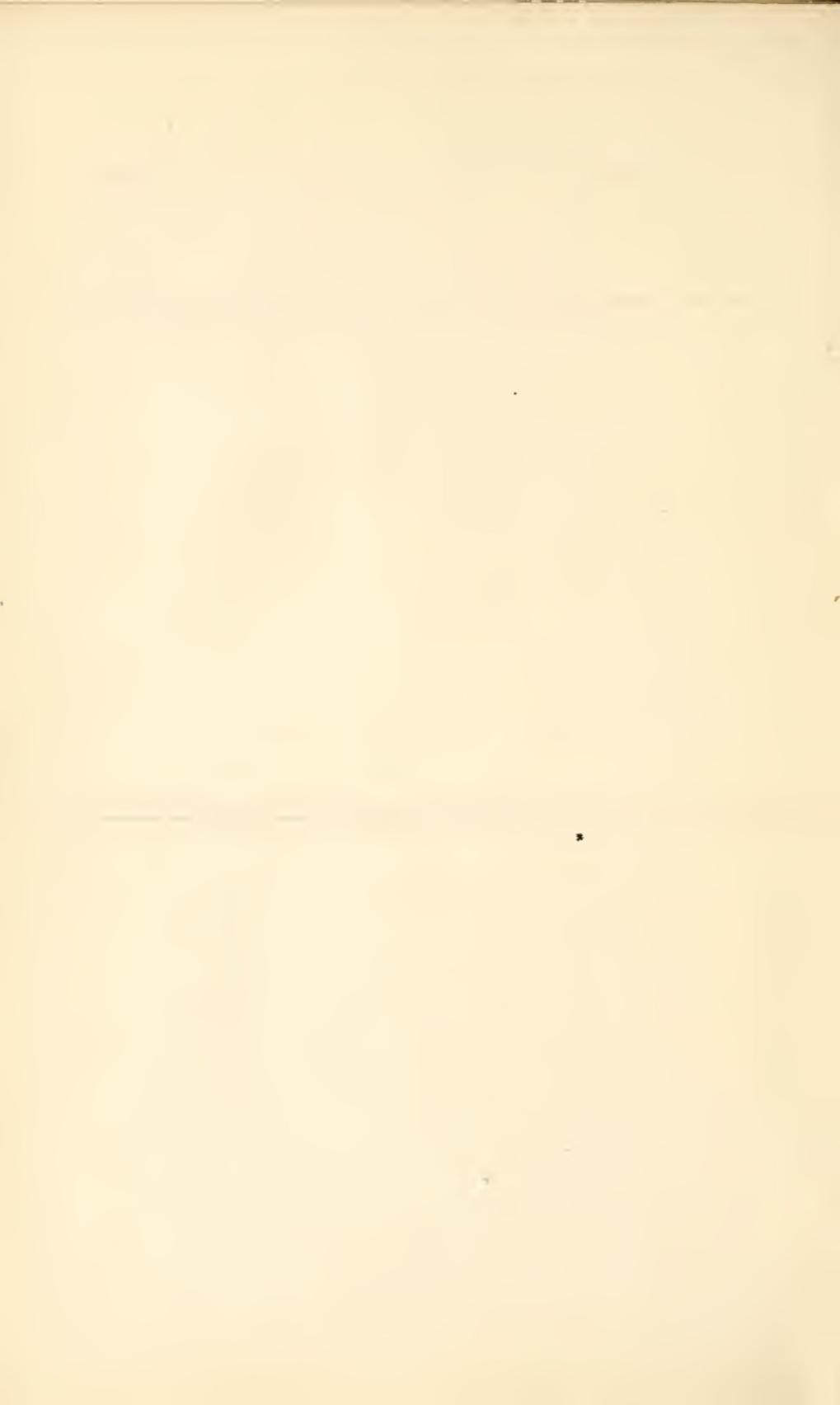




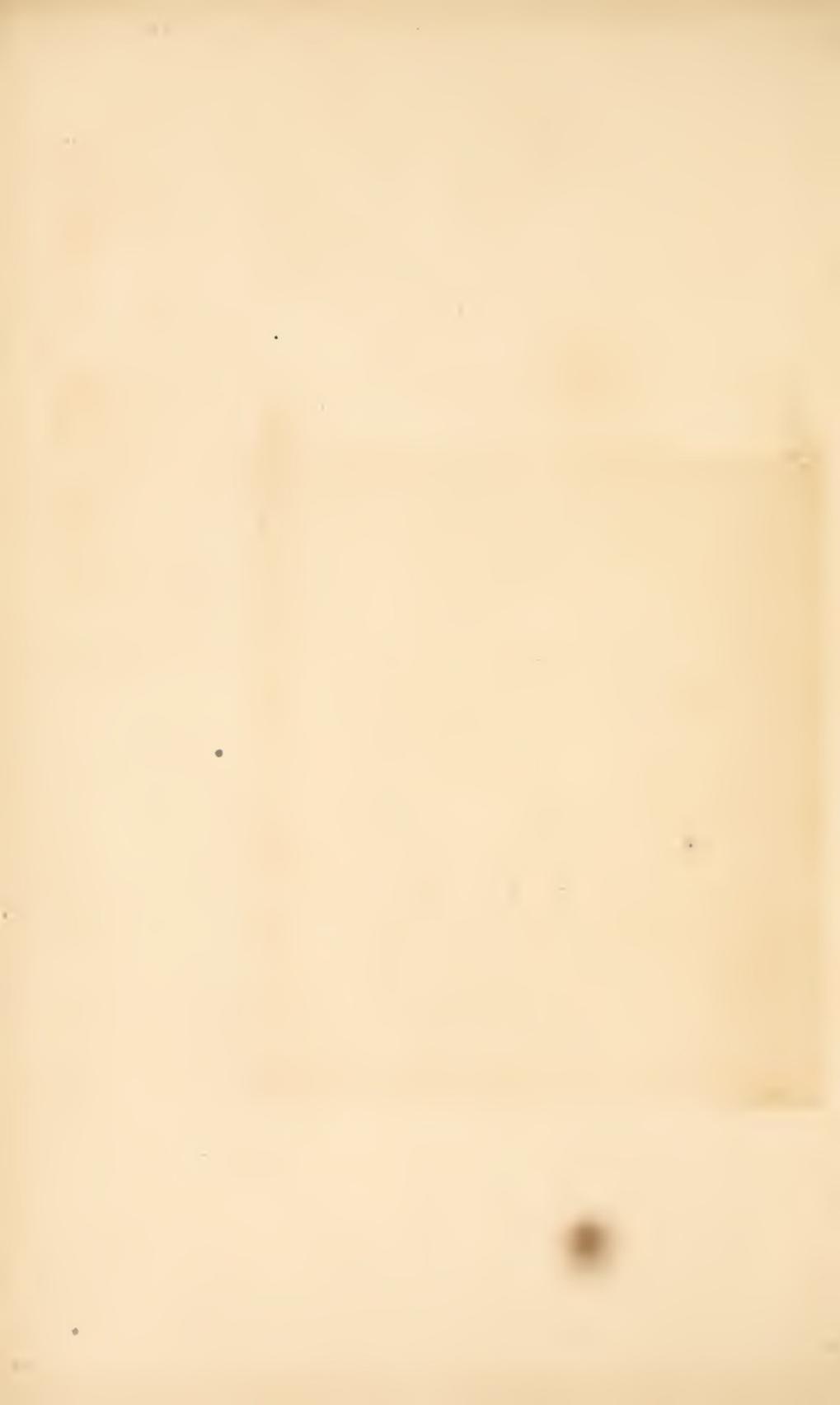












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